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To: [Sam Owen](#)
Subject: New Message From Eklutna Hydro - CONTACT US
Date: Monday, February 19, 2024 5:51:40 PM

To the Esteemed Officials and Stakeholders,

I am reaching out to articulate my profound reservations regarding the "AWWU Portal" initiative proposed by The Owners. This plan, targeting the mitigation of the Eklutna River, starkly misses the mark in addressing the essential ecological requirements of the river and its historic salmon populations. The Eklutna River, with its legacy of supporting all five species of salmon, is a jewel in our ecological and cultural landscape, a fact that the proposed project fails to honor adequately.

The foundation of the 1991 agreement was to ensure the preservation and restoration of the Eklutna River's ecosystem to a state as close to its original condition as feasibly possible. However, the AWWU Portal proposal diverges alarmingly from this foundational goal, presenting a path that risks the ecological integrity and the rich cultural history tied to the river. Ignoring the critical need for a diverse and thriving salmon population in the river does a disservice not only to the ecosystem but to our community's heritage and future.

Understanding the species composition of the Eklutna River before its alteration poses challenges, yet the oral histories and traditions passed down from our indigenous communities offer a rich tapestry of knowledge. These stories are not mere anecdotes; they are testaments to the river's historical biodiversity and a guide to what restoration should aim to achieve.

The necessity of a vibrant river ecosystem, particularly for sockeye salmon fishing near Anchorage, cannot be overstated. The Kenai River serves as a testament to the socio-economic benefits of such ecosystems, showcasing the potential for Anchorage to harness similar benefits. A revitalized Eklutna River would not only enrich our community with natural beauty and recreational opportunities but would also serve as a crucial economic asset, much like its counterpart.

While I recognize the utility's objective to maintain affordable rates, it is crucial to embrace a broader vision—one that considers the paramount importance of sustaining our environment and, by extension, the Anchorage and Alaskan economy. This vision requires a commitment to solutions that foster all aspects of our community's well-being, from ecological health to economic vitality.

Moreover, the opportunity to leverage federal grant funds for this project should not be overlooked. Numerous federal initiatives aimed at environmental restoration and sustainable infrastructure offer financial resources that could mitigate the costs associated with more comprehensive and ecologically sound mitigation strategies. Investing in such solutions would not only align with the original goals of the 1991 agreement but also stimulate our local economy through job creation and long-term economic benefits.

In conclusion, the AWWU Portal proposal is insufficient for the monumental task of restoring the Eklutna River to its rightful state. I strongly advocate for a reconsideration of this approach in favor of a strategy that fully embraces the return and prosperity of all five salmon species. Such a strategy should honor our indigenous heritage, contribute positively to our economy, and seize the potential for federal funding to support these endeavors.

Let us choose a path that reflects a deep commitment to our environment, our economy, and our community's future. I urge you to seek an alternative that aligns with the profound spirit of the 1991 agreement and the collective aspirations of our community.

Thank you for considering this critical matter. I am eager to see how our collective efforts can lead to a sustainable and flourishing future for the Eklutna River and our community at large.

Warmest regards,

Valeria Foster